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Detroit Water and Sewerage Director Victor Mercado is holding question and answer sessions with local suburban officials to defend the funding of Detroit's new radio system.

Apparently, Mercado thinks letting suburban customers foot the bill for a Detroit radio system is fair. I beg to disagree.

I find it extremely hard to believe anyone could actually think suburban Detroit Water and Sewerage Department customers are "not being saddled with unfair costs."

This is one more example of an out of control system which treats its suburban customers as little more than a cash cow.

Suburban local officials and legislators who represent southeast Michigan customers of the DWSD are virtually unanimous in their feeling that this most recent dollar grab is fundamentally unfair.

This summer the *Detroit News* reported that the DWSD is paying one-third of the cost of Detroit's new \$130 million 800 MHz radio system. According to the *Detroit News*, the Detroit police and fire departments will use about 69 percent of the network's 10,000-plus radios, while DWSD will only use 11 percent.

I would like Mercado to explain how this is not an unfair cost. Why should Detroit police and fire department expenses be subsidized by suburban ratepayers?

DWSD suburban ratepayers should only pay for what they use – water – not costs incurred by the city of Detroit.

Two and a half years ago I introduced legislation that would have created an oversight board for DWSD in charge of approving water rate increases and contracts totaling more than \$50,000. After consulting Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Governor Granholm vetoed my legislation.

I have introduced Senate Bill 372 that would again create an oversight board for DWSD operations and plan to hold hearings this fall to get to the bottom of this issue.

It is my hope, and many other's, that this time, the legislation is signed into law.

State Sen. Laura Toy
6th Senate District